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AUTHOR Deakins, Karen; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This document describes the organization and function of a school based supervision team and its role in teacher education. The teachers that comprise the team are working staff members in a secondary school. They maintain their teaching responsibilities while taking the responsibility as coordinators of the total on-site preservice program at their school. The primary responsibility of preservice supervisory personnel is to coordinate the expectations of the college of education with which they are working and the demands at the cooperating public school to best maximize the learning experience for student teachers. The initial function of the supervision team is to orient student teachers to the physical realities of the school in which they will be working. Additionally, the team introduces the student teachers to their cooperating teachers in the school. Thereafter, the means of continuing orientation is through seminars. Planning and implementation of these seminars is an important function of the school-based team. Formally, each team member supervises two student teachers, offering support as well as advice. One function of the team member is that of evaluator of the student's performance. To the university supervisors who would ordinarily perform these tasks, the team is college supervision extended to the school setting. The team's supervision does not preclude separate observations by university supervisors and/or their aides. (JD)

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The School-Based Supervision Team: An-Alternative

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Karen Deakins, Prince George's County Public
Schools

Anna Catherine Dunn, Prince George's County
Public Schools

James D. Greenberg, College of Education,
University of Maryland

Thomas Harwood, Prince George's County Public
Schools

Janet Sellen, Prince George's County Public
Schools

Abstract

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Karen Deakins, Prince George's County Public
Schools

Anna Catherine Dunn, Prince George's County
Public Schools

James D. Greenberg, College of Education,
University of Maryland

Thomas Harwood, Prince George's County
Public Schools

Janet Sellen, Prince George's County Public
Schools

The School-Based Supervision Team is an alternative model of collaboration in teacher education. It is an attempt to incorporate the talents, knowledge, and experience of a group of on-site secondary school faculty members into a vehicle for providing a comprehensive teacher education program in a realistic setting. The School-Based Team functions as an alternative to traditional college supervision of either the multiple supervisor or single generalist coordinator type. Instead, the Team acts as an on-site extension of the college program through a system of communication and coordination involving a campus-based coordinator and a network of specialist liaisons.

Team members are selected on the basis of their interest in teacher education; representation of a variety of disciplines, philosophies, and teaching styles; ability to work effectively in a team relationship; and openness to diverse values and approaches. Team functions include orientation of preservice students to the school setting and program; planning and implementation of regular seminars; coordination of a variety of extensive experiences; communication and problem solving activities with preservice students, inservice cooperating teachers, school administrators, and college personnel; informal and formal cross-discipline supervision of student teaching including observations and

conferencing; and performance and program evaluation. An inservice program ties Team members to the college through regular sessions with a campus-based coordinator. This component facilitates joint planning, problem solving, and analysis activity along with enhancement of supervision and related skills.

The advantages of having an on-site, accessible, credible, and knowledgeable Team of practicing professionals have proven to be numerous for all parties concerned. Preservice students are afforded a multiple available resource and campus and school-based teacher educators are involved in a new approach which promotes integration and collaboration along with opportunities for mutual growth.

The School-Based Supervision Team: An Alternative

General Background

Collaboration is a word, and a concept, that has dominated much of the teacher education scene for at least the last decade. It is a powerful concept because of the synergy suggested by its very definition: working together, sharing, pooling resources and ideas, combining forces, unification of strength. It is also a constructive concept because it has implied a positive alternative to the historically separate, and sometimes divisive, roles played by colleges/universities and public schools in the teacher education arena.

At least two fundamental issues have been consistently confronted in the process of movement toward collaborative approaches. The first is the issue of program quality and the second is the issue of control. Supporters of collaboration have assumed that program quality is enhanced by a joining of intellectual forces and diverse knowledge bases. Similarly, they see improvement in the shift toward field-based versus campus-based programs and in an increased "reality" context as opposed to an "abstract" context. The control issue has generally revolved around the question of "who knows better" what teacher education should be and should contain. Identification of "real needs" has come from the traditional home base of colleges and schools of education, from school system administrators and offices of staff development, and from classroom teachers and their professional organizations. Collaborative ventures have attempted to reconcile these diverse perspectives through provision of vehicles for informal dialogue as well as through formal cooperative governance structures. The political pendulum in this matter, however, has shown an overall shift from the once unchallenged position of higher education as the dominant decision maker and program designer to the emerging power

position of teachers in this area. Tangible evidence of the "swing" can be seen in the recent federal legislation on Teachers' Centers which dictates that 51% of all policy boards in this domain must be comprised of classroom teacher representatives.

Examples of collaborative teacher education efforts have emerged in a variety of forms. Some have been large scale, others small; some have focused on preservice teacher preparation; others on inservice programs; some have included both aspects and have attempted to unify preservice and inservice within a framework of continuous professional development. Funding sources have been varied, but much has been accomplished through application of financial resources from states, local school systems, and colleges and universities. The alternatives have been numerous, and the growth in a general spread of cooperative endeavors has been great.

Lately, however, the general economic crunch has caused some erosion of support for collaborative teacher education ventures. Formerly valued programs have been reexamined, sometimes to be labeled "luxuries" that are too expensive. A corollary effect has been the reemergence of the control question and a pervasive survival atmosphere in which protection of "turf" and considerations of cost-benefit have gained ground. In this context, new examples of retrenchment into single institution initiatives as well as alternative collaboration models can be seen. One such alternative is the School-Based Supervision Team.

In 1973, the College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park, and the Prince George's County, Maryland Public Schools initiated a comprehensive collaborative project based at Shugart Junior High School. The scope of the project was quite broad but included preservice and inservice education

components in its design. After two years of positive growth and operation, financial constraints caught up with the project and it was cut from the budget. At this point, it was clear that a mutually valued field site for teacher education and a rewarding collaborative association would have to be displaced; or an alternative would have to be found. Consideration of the latter possibility led teachers and administrators at the school and a college representative to explore ways in which a program could be maintained without special funding for an on-site college coordinator or another similar position. From this seemingly negative catalyst, a positive recognition of existing factors developed: 1) the college and school people had come to know each other very well; 2) a great deal of mutual respect for perspectives, expertise, and contributions had been gained; 3) genuine trust had been generated. As a result, a new complex of roles was hypothesized including a greater level of responsibility and direction for classroom teachers in the school. It was felt that their interest, talent and knowledge relative to teacher education, complemented by a continuing association and interchange with college personnel, could lead to an alternative which had merit, viability and uniqueness.

Role Definition

Unlike the traditional college supervisory model, the School-Based Supervision Team model has the unique distinction of functioning autonomously, while maintaining adequate university contact, and of being on-site. The teachers that comprise the Team are "working" staff members in the school. When the teachers become Team members they not only maintain their teaching responsibilities they also take on a new role and responsibility as coordinators of the total on-site preservice program at their school.

Team members also generally function as cooperating teachers in either an individual or sharing arrangement with one or more student teachers. Each

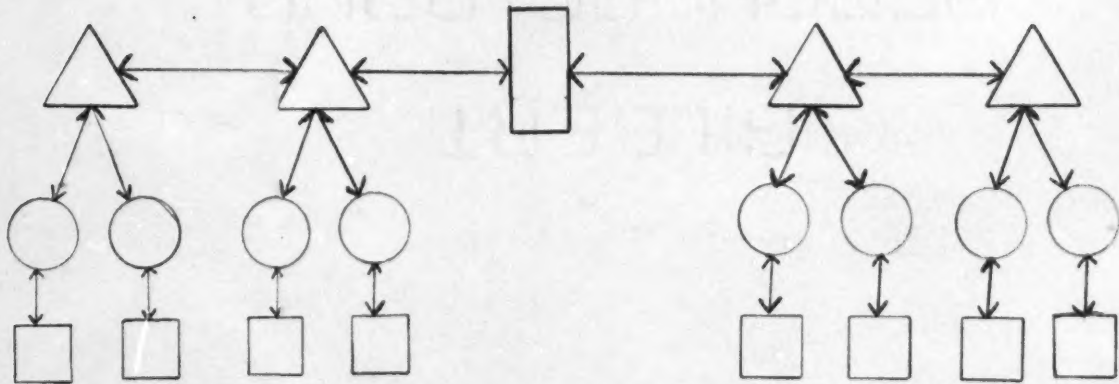
Team member also functions within the Team in a specific role such as university contact, administrative contact, or faculty representative.

With the Supervision Team model, contact with the university is maintained and is perceived as a guiding, reflective and analytical influence. This relationship is developed and communication is supported through periodic inservice sessions and through contact with resource persons representing specific departments and subject areas at the university.

In their multi-faceted role as Supervision Team members, teachers have opportunities for interaction and meaningful communication through representation of both school and university. Contacts include other teams, school administrators, student teachers, cooperating teachers, college liaison personnel and the Director of Laboratory Experiences.

SCHOOL-BASED SUPERVISION TEAM

PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS



ROLES & INTERACTIONS

KEY:



SUPERVISION TEAM MEMBER



COLLEGE COORDINATOR



STUDENT TEACHER



COOPERATING TEACHER

Team Functions

The initial function of the Supervision Team is orientation. The Team provides, in a half day initial session with student teachers, information specific to the school and to the beginning of their experience. This orientation continues through weekly seminars throughout the student teaching experience. Perhaps the great amount of information covered is more than can be initially absorbed, but the purpose is to make the situation known and to put the student teachers at ease. Orientation covers such topics as school facilities, school mechanics from piddling supply routes to disciplinary channels, school philosophy by bringing in the school's administrators, the nature of the student population the school serves, and an explanation of the Team's role. Additionally, the Team introduces the student teachers to their cooperating teachers. Thereafter, the means of continuing orientation is through the seminars.

Planning and implementation of these seminars is a second integral function of the School-Based Team. Although the exact description, timing and number of sessions may vary, the structure is based on utilization of Team members as facilitators. Optimum planning is detailed but flexible, striving for intragroup dynamics, active participation by student teachers and most of all, responsiveness to group and individual needs. Seminar topics tend to deal more with practical information than with theoretical matters. In soliciting student teachers' concerns, the Team has found that the topics identified as most pertinent inevitably reflected a leaning toward the concrete -- such as classroom management, audio visual materials and machinery, and techniques for dealing with wide ranges of ability levels.

A third function of the Team is that of making student teachers aware of the school as an entity and themselves as individual teachers within this structure, both philosophically and practically. Through coordination of the student teachers' experiences, the Team arranges for some time to be spent by student teachers working with students in resource and alternative programs and helps student teachers set up peer observations and give each other feedback. Through these means, both in seminars and by observations, the student teachers can teach each other. Another aspect of this coordinating role is matching student teachers with cooperating teachers, based on mutual needs, and often either broadening the scope of student teachers' experiences or adjusting schedules as needs arise. In these areas, a school-based Team has the advantage of being available to arrange for the involvement of two or more cooperating teachers or to adjust student teacher's pace and load on individual bases.

The facet that ties the Team most closely to the university is the role of direct supervision. Formally, each Team member supervises two student teachers and seeks to preconference, observe, and postconference at least four times. However, through informal "supervision" the Team's greatest strength can be found; namely, there are four members of a Team, each with a different personality, from whom a student teacher can seek help. Secondly, there is what might be termed proximity service; that is, the Team members see the student teachers through the day -- at lunch, across the hall as classes pass, in the faculty lounge, in other places. With this informal contact through the day, a team member can show continued interest to many student teachers, not merely those under that member's direct supervision. Additionally, this continuing contact allows the Team to sense crises as they develop. The Team is simply readily accessible.

A final function of the Team is that of evaluation. There are two very different yet significant aspects to evaluation. The first is the responsibility of Team members, based on observations and pre and postconferencing, to complete final evaluation forms. The other aspect is the ongoing evaluation of the model through formal and informal means.

Overall, the Team's functions can be viewed from the perspectives of the four external groups whom it serves, bridges, and supports. To the university supervisors who would ordinarily perform this task, the Team is College supervision extended to the school setting. The Team's supervision does not preclude separate observations by university supervisors and/or their aid.

To its professional peers, specifically other cooperating teachers, the Team is a group of cooperating teachers who are not to be seen as anything but equals with a difference in task. In addition to the role of cooperating teacher is that of supervisor, similar but with a notable distinction. The supervisory emphasis is on general classroom techniques, not "intruding" on content expertise.

To the student teachers, the Team is a cooperative unit acting as "the university supervisor" with knowledge of that school's specific situation. The Team evaluates student teaching performance and holds seminars as an extension of the university conveniently in the location of the student teaching experience. The Team thereby becomes a more personal extension of the university through the closer ties that develop as a result of such frequent communication among student teachers and Team members.

To the school's students, the Team members are teachers of another kind of student - the student teacher. The Team members are interested in what

is going on in the department areas of those whom a team member supervises. The students view this interest as unifying the school. This role delineation must be communicated clearly, completely, and often if it is to remain viable and nonthreatening.

Inservice Connection

A primary remuneration for teachers acting as members of the Supervision Team is the opportunity to take three hours of field-based graduate level work in the area of supervision, with the University of Maryland granting tuition credit for each semester's participation. This course work is not just traditional formal instruction, but also involves independent projects that team members can relate to their particular situation. Team members, through meetings with the college representative, not only obtain the basic skills for the observation and evaluation of student teachers, but engage in the dialogue necessary to develop Team building and problem solving skills applicable to the experience in which they are involved.

The professional growth that takes place within this format goes far beyond the skills and knowledge usually obtained in formal classroom instruction on campus. Team members, individually or as a group, satisfy academic requirements through relevant written projects, but the true professional growth in the area of preservice supervision comes through the actual experience of working with their fellow professionals and College of Education undergraduates within the setting of the contemporary secondary school. The transferability of these Team building, communications and problem solving skills is a major element of meaningful professional growth. Simultaneously, the inservice connection forges greater links between theory and practice, and between the campus and the field, so that a genuinely comprehensive perspective develops for all concerned.

Process Evolution/Problem Solving

The primary responsibility of preservice supervisory personnel is to coordinate the expectations of a college of education and the demands at the cooperating site to best maximize the learning experience for student teachers. The Team, as a supervision agent, must decide how best to achieve this end and plan accordingly. Decisions regarding seminar scheduling and topics, observations and evaluation criteria, along with more specific problems that may occur during the student teaching experience, must be dealt with. It should be noted that although the Team has a great deal of autonomy with its decision making process, the Team is often too close to a problem to accurately identify and take steps to solve it. The conferences held between the Team and the College representative have proven immensely helpful, as problems can be thoroughly aired and an objective point of view presented. The forum of discussion and the non-involved perspective of the college representative has generated at least as much professional growth on the part of team members as has any formal research. The evolution of the problem solving process is illustrated below.

One of the student teachers assigned to the site was assigned to two cooperating teachers of varying styles in hopes that she could synthesize the best of both styles into her pre-service experience. As it turned out, however, several factors worked against this previously successful strategy. The cooperating teachers shared neither a personal nor professional rapport and communications between the two were totally lacking. The dichotomy of teaching styles was apparently too sharp for the student teacher, and frustration on the part of all constituents soon developed. The Team member directly supervising

the student teacher was told by all parties that everything was going fine, but another Team member that had more incidental contact soon discovered the existence of problems.

Attempts by the Supervision Team member to reconcile difficulties were proving inadequate, and conferences with other team members did not develop a workable plan of action. At a Team meeting with the College representative, the problem was discussed and options aired. Appropriate contact personnel at the University were identified and their possible intervention planned for. A strategy was formulated and implemented that involved placing the student teacher with only one of the cooperating teachers. Other Team members were asked to monitor the situation since direct communication between student teacher and her specific team supervisor appeared to be lacking.

An observation after a week of the new arrangement disclosed that the recommended plan was inappropriate. As the student teacher was becoming frustrated to the point of giving up, the student's advisors at the University were called in for support, and the team member charged with direct supervision was finally able to establish a definitive course of action that reversed the original plan. The remaining pre-service experience of the student teacher was carefully observed for future difficulties by all team members, and the student teacher eventually demonstrated much personal and professional growth over the remainder of her experience.

Although a written narrative of the above example perhaps fails to demonstrate the extent of team building and problem solving that developed, an important principle became apparent to Team members. In many cases the individual supervisor may not be cognizant of difficulties that occur between student teachers and cooperating teachers that other Team members, for various reasons, may be more aware of.

Nor is it always possible for problems to be solved by one individual without the input of other Team members and/or the college representative because of being too close to a situation. This certainly is not true in every case, but the input and support of the Team definitely enabled this one problem to be solved. This dynamic is believed to be a major strength of the team concept.

Evaluations

Evaluation of this pilot effort, as stated previously, was limited to data collection on participant satisfaction and response. Questionnaires were devised by the Team and were administered to student teachers as well as non-Team cooperating teachers. Administrators and Team members were interviewed. Questionnaire responses were anonymous and included a range of "forced choice" and open-ended "essay" questions. Interviews were relatively informal and were directed to the solicitation of reactions to the pilot program. In the case of student teachers a three-level reaction was sought: 1) reaction to the student teaching experience and to the school as a student teaching site; 2) reaction to the cooperating teacher as advisor, facilitator, evaluator; 3) reaction to the Team as advisor, facilitator, evaluator, and seminar director. In the case of cooperating teachers and building administrators, reaction was generally sought regarding assessment of the Team supervision concept in practice, its effect and degree of success, and its implications for the school.

Responses to the questionnaire were generally very positive and reinforced the idea that the Team supervision approach could work as an alternative to other models of college-oriented supervision. Student teachers, on the whole, reported that the school situation provided a valuable student teaching experience, that they had learned a great deal from it, and that the atmosphere of the school was perceived as warm and open to student teachers. Relationships

with cooperating teachers were reported to be positive, feedback was viewed as sufficient in quantity and quality, and mutual openness was generally reported as present throughout. The Team was viewed positively, both as a source of help and fair evaluation as well as a source of caring and personal advisement. Student teachers generally rejected the notion that a traditional university supervisor would have been more helpful than the Team, and they expressed a sense of appreciation for the value of this kind of on-site resource. Seminars were viewed as worthwhile and productive; however, the before-school hour was seen as a definite problem. Other problems cited indicated other competing time demands and needs, one unfavorable response to the practice of cross-discipline supervision, and some desire for more visible participation by University people.

Overall, cooperating teachers approved of the concept and reacted positively to the role their colleagues were playing. There was some concern about the amount of time Team members were allowing for their supervisor role, but sentiment was generally supportive. Administrators, too were quite supportive and saw two elements of the program as key: 1) A team of teachers could handle this job and provide excellent resources to "resident" student teachers; 2) The addition of the student teachers to the building was a positive infusion that should be maintained. A concern was expressed regarding the demands of the role and the time commitment involved. However, on balance, the professional growth for Team members and others, and the addition of a preservice program to the school environment seemed to outweigh the potential difficulties. Finally, the Team members' own perceptions also reinforced confidence in the viability of this alternative. Problems seen included severe time demands, combined work load, and occasional stress from problem solving situations.

However, they strongly valued the experience, their own professional growth, the concept of the Team and the contribution they perceived they had made. Endorsement of the approach was made tangible by the fact that each member expressed desire to continue in this role and to devote themselves to furtherance of the concept. The Team concluded, then, that reactions to the pilot effort were positive and represented general support from each of the directly participating constituencies. University personnel, interviewed by the college representative, expressed similar support and openness to continuation.

Importance of Team member selection

Evaluation and reflection, which showed positive perceptions, also led to the conscious recognition that selection of Team members was an element of singular importance. After all, the heart of any educational endeavor is in the people who design and implement it. This matter was no exception. Qualities of individuals might vary significantly, but certain qualities seem essential to an effective team:

1. A strong interest in supervision and preservice education, with experience preferable
2. Representation of diverse teaching fields, backgrounds, styles, and philosophies
3. An ability to work well with others in a team relationship
4. A good rapport with peers
5. Willingness to take time to fulfill the role demands
6. Respect and appreciation for others' points of view and values.

If these qualities were not present, then success would probably be less than assured. For once the team is operating, as previously stated, it is

fairly autonomous. The planning, sensitivity to problems, solving of problems, and scheduling of observations, conferences, contact with University liaisons, and other aspects of operation are all self-directed. If the Team is not initially comprised of people who can do these things well, then the concept is severely damaged.

Traditional Objectives

Reflective evaluation includes consideration of the objectives of supervision and the supervisory role in general. A question is raised as to whether this alternative approach meets traditional objectives for college-oriented supervision along with new objectives generated by the Team concept.

It seems that the major traditional objectives were met:

- 1) Orientations were arranged and carried out thoroughly; i.e., the school was prepared for the student teachers and the student teachers were prepared for the school.
- 2) Seminars were provided and dealt with the two areas of usual concern: problems with the student teacher role and problems with instruction and management in the classroom.
- 3) Supervision was provided on a one to one basis, concentrating on general teaching skills and effectiveness from a different perspective than that of the cooperating teacher. Supervision by Team members was periodic and normally incorporated pre- and post-observation conferences, often including the cooperating teacher in a three-way communication.

Thus, the Team approach met traditional objectives of college-oriented supervision in the basic role definition. Not only were responsibilities of traditional campus-based supervisors covered, but also those of an on-site

generalist pre-service coordinator. What was missing, of course, was the regular presence of university supervisors in the school. However, contact was maintained with these persons by the Team and visits were facilitated. If difficulties arose, involvement of the university liaison person in a particular discipline did not prove to be a problem.

Unforeseen Strengths

The nature of the student teaching experience is such that a great deal of anxiety is often present on the part of student teachers. The undergraduates are very aware of the importance of the evaluation of their performance. The setting for student teaching can be far removed from the college classroom and the personnel at the cooperating schools represent an unknown quantity. Without the presence of an effective mediating force, student teachers can experience exaggerated difficulties. The Team has proven to be just such a force because it is not only a link with the University, but is an integral part of the student teaching site.

The lack of communication between staff members is detrimental to the process of education in any school. The site for the model is probably above average in the quality of staff to staff communication, but not without its problems. Much communication did take place among Supervision Team members and other staff members particularly cooperating teachers, that may not have occurred had the student teacher's supervisor been an "outsider". This proved to be an advantage for all involved.

Another benefit of the model that was not foreseen was the opportunity for the Team members to get a feel for what goes on within a secondary public school classroom other than their own. All team members felt that they profited from having the opportunity to observe the teaching process in other

content areas, a role that is not often available in the segmented, discipline-oriented, secondary school. Continued cross-discipline supervision, it would seem, can help improve communications and empathy between staff members at a site for student teaching.

In almost any other model of pre-service education, the supervision of student teachers is done by an individual that represents a college of education. No matter how supportive of university policy a cooperating teacher may be, a common perception is that the methods instructor is a representative of the "theoretical world". Often this dichotomy of perspectives on the art of teaching is detrimental to the development of teachers who should see the university as a community and academic support site. What is often forgotten by public school teachers is that often they did incorporate knowledge and skills gained in undergraduate preparation in their classrooms when they started teaching. It is also forgotten that this is often the only background that student teachers bring with them to the cooperating site. No matter how effective the journeyman teacher becomes with experience, professional growth should be perceived by that teacher as a real opportunity through continued association with a college.

The Team concept provides for such an association. The placing of student teachers under the supervision of successful teachers who both recognize the stresses and strains of practical teaching and at the same time reinforce the perspective of the university would appear to accomplish two things: 1) It provides a credible multiple resource from which student teachers can learn and on whom they can depend, and 2) it goes a long way towards solving the "us-them" perception that so often separates the public school and the university.

The concept of a team of public school teachers, aware of the trials and tribulations of daily teaching, working in support of the university's goals cannot help but develop an awareness of the marriage between the two institutions for the participating student teachers. An on-site Supervision Team has the opportunity to represent both the "real" and "theoretical" worlds. For example, frustration often occurs when a concept encouraged from the research base of the university, such as implementing individualized instruction, is attempted by the inexperienced student teacher in the setting of the public school classroom. Supervision Team members can not only verbally support the attempt to put theory into practice, but in their own day to day classroom performance can show student teachers that these "theories" do work. In summary, the School-Based Supervision Team offers a unique opportunity to close the gap between the university and the public school.

The school administration lends added support to the program because it is integrated with the school staff and involves a significant professional contribution by and to the school.

Team members grow personally and professionally by their involvement in the planning and execution of the program and by their enhanced professional role.

The university values the involvement and contributions of school-based teams and encourages their work through collaboration and suggestions.

The School-Based Supervision Team concept offers the field of teacher education a tangible vehicle for integrating a great deal of fresh input from talented practicing teachers. It provides addition of significant human resources at a small cost.

The school administration may view the program as a conflict of interests and a diversion from the primary role and responsibilities of the school and its staff.

Team members may be spread "too thin" as a result of the time and responsibility demands inherent in the coordination and supervision role.

University professors may resent team members, who are not part of "the department", taking up supervisory responsibilities and may not believe that teams have the background or ability to function at this level.

If the process which recruits teachers for team participation is not handled with care, the resultant input may be shallow or unimaginative and may not contribute a rich increment to the program.

The ledger, above, is presented as an aid to objective examination of factors which might have local significance in other settings. In practice, participants in the pilot experience found that the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. The likelihood of that positive outcome being replicated, and of advantages overshadowing any disadvantages, depends on the care, the people, and the communication involved in the establishment of other versions of this program.

The School-Based Supervision Team Model is offered as a viable alternative to collaboration in teacher education with positive contributions from university and school perspectives. The program is not viewed as the way, or necessarily the better way, but one which has promise if the right conditions are met.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Experiences with adaptation and implementation of any model, including this one, will vary from instance to instance. There are unique factors inherent in each situation. The pilot experience, in which this model was first tested, was a notable success. Participants perceived that a number of advantages clearly emerged as events unfolded and enlightened the concepts which had previously been abstract projections. Yet, satisfaction with this positive experience did not preclude the recognition of possible pitfalls or the need to hypothesize potential advantage-disadvantage considerations.

Potential Advantages

The Team is "on-site" and close to reality of the teaching situation and its demands. Student teachers' ability to adjust to the school setting and to cope with problems is thus enhanced by ready access to the first-hand understanding and experience of the team.

The School-Based Supervision Team concept offers a unique vehicle for closing the gap between universities and public schools in the area of pre-service education.

The interdisciplinary approach to supervision promotes useful focusing on general teaching skills and competencies while avoiding subject matter based "hang-ups" and conflicts.

The interdisciplinary approach to supervision promotes genuine communication and enhances insights across school departments and teaching areas.

The Team is strengthened by inclusion of professionals with diverse philosophies, styles, and backgrounds. Mutual respect and communication help weld the differences into a unified team whose nature provides a richness unavailable from a single source.

Potential Disadvantages

The Team is removed from the university environment and its perspectives. Thus it may lack the objectivity inherent in university personnel's distance from school conditions and advice to student teachers may be too subjective and parochial.

This mixing of traditional institutional roles may affect a healthy balance of theory and practice and reduce the impact of fresh ideas (brought by student teachers) in favor of quicker socialization to the "system".

Leaving subject matter based feedback to the province of the cooperating teacher may limit a significant supervisory contribution in this realm.

Some cooperating teachers and/or other school personnel may resent "intrusion" by peers from other areas and may denigrate the validity of team members' perceptions.

Disparate philosophies, styles, and backgrounds may prevent formation of a cohesive team unit and student teachers may suffer from having to deal with conflicting expectations and approaches.

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The advantages of having an on-site, accessible, credible, and knowledgeable Team of practicing professionals have proven to be numerous for all parties concerned. Preservice students are afforded a multiple available resource and campus and school-based teacher educators are involved in a new approach which promotes integration and collaboration along with opportunities for mutual growth.

The School-Based Supervision Team: An Alternative

General Background

Collaboration is a word, and a concept, that has dominated much of the teacher education scene for at least the last decade. It is a powerful concept because of the synergy suggested by its very definition: working together, sharing, pooling resources and ideas, combining forces, unification of strength. It is also a constructive concept because it has implied a positive alternative to the historically separate, and sometimes divisive, roles played by colleges/universities and public schools in the teacher education arena.

At least two fundamental issues have been consistently confronted in the process of movement toward collaborative approaches. The first is the issue of program quality and the second is the issue of control. Supporters of collaboration have assumed that program quality is enhanced by a joining of intellectual forces and diverse knowledge bases. Similarly, they see improvement in the shift toward field-based versus campus-based programs and in an increased "reality" context as opposed to an "abstract" context. The control issue has generally revolved around the question of "who knows better" what teacher education should be and should contain. Identification of "real needs" has come from the traditional home base of colleges and schools of education, from school system administrators and offices of staff development, and from classroom teachers and their professional organizations. Collaborative ventures have attempted to reconcile these diverse perspectives through provision of vehicles for informal dialogue as well as through formal cooperative governance structures. The political pendulum in this matter, however, has shown an overall shift from the once unchallenged position of higher education as the dominant decision maker and program designer to the emerging power

position of teachers in this area. Tangible evidence of the "swing" can be seen in the recent federal legislation on Teachers' Centers which dictates that 51% of all policy boards in this domain must be comprised of classroom teacher representatives.

Examples of collaborative teacher education efforts have emerged in a variety of forms. Some have been large scale, others small; some have focused on preservice teacher preparation; others on inservice programs; some have included both aspects and have attempted to unify preservice and inservice within a framework of continuous professional development. Funding sources have been varied, but much has been accomplished through application of financial resources from states, local school systems, and colleges and universities. The alternatives have been numerous, and the growth in a general spread of cooperative endeavors has been great.

Lately, however, the general economic crunch has caused some erosion of support for collaborative teacher education ventures. Formerly valued programs have been reexamined, sometimes to be labeled "luxuries" that are too expensive. A corollary effect has been the reemergence of the control question and a pervasive survival atmosphere in which protection of "turf" and considerations of cost-benefit have gained ground. In this context, new examples of retrenchment into single institution initiatives as well as alternative collaboration models can be seen. One such alternative is the School-Based Supervision Team.

In 1973, the College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park, and the Prince George's County, Maryland Public Schools initiated a comprehensive collaborative project based at Shugart Junior High School. The scope of the project was quite broad but included preservice and inservice education

components in its design. After two years of positive growth and operation, financial constraints caught up with the project and it was cut from the budget. At this point, it was clear that a mutually valued field site for teacher education and a rewarding collaborative association would have to be displaced; or an alternative would have to be found. Consideration of the latter possibility led teachers and administrators at the school and a college representative to explore ways in which a program could be maintained without special funding for an on-site college coordinator or another similar position. From this seemingly negative catalyst, a positive recognition of existing factors developed: 1) the college and school people had come to know each other very well; 2) a great deal of mutual respect for perspectives, expertise, and contributions had been gained; 3) genuine trust had been generated. As a result, a new complex of roles was hypothesized including a greater level of responsibility and direction for classroom teachers in the school. It was felt that their interest, talent and knowledge relative to teacher education, complemented by a continuing association and interchange with college personnel, could lead to an alternative which had merit, viability and uniqueness.

Role Definition

Unlike the traditional college supervisory model, the School-Based Supervision Team model has the unique distinction of functioning autonomously, while maintaining adequate university contact, and of being on-site. The teachers that comprise the Team are "working" staff members in the school. When the teachers become Team members they not only maintain their teaching responsibilities they also take on a new role and responsibility as coordinators of the total on-site preservice program at their school.

Team members also generally function as cooperating teachers in either an individual or sharing arrangement with one or more student teachers. Each

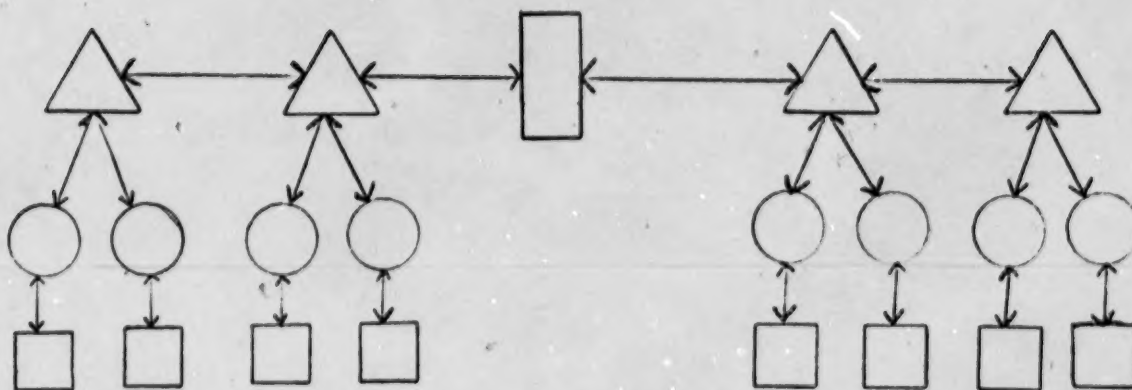
Team member also functions within the Team in a specific role such as university contact, administrative contact, or faculty representative.

With the Supervision Team model, contact with the university is maintained and is perceived as a guiding, reflective and analytical influence. This relationship is developed and communication is supported through periodic inservice sessions and through contact with resource persons representing specific departments and subject areas at the university.

In their multi-faceted role as Supervision Team members, teachers have opportunities for interaction and meaningful communication through representation of both school and university. Contacts include other teams, school administrators, student teachers, cooperating teachers, college liaison personnel and the Director of Laboratory Experiences.

SCHOOL-BASED SUPERVISION TEAM

PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS



ROLES & INTERACTIONS

KEY:



SUPERVISION TEAM MEMBER



COLLEGE COORDINATOR



STUDENT TEACHER



COOPERATING TEACHER

Team Functions

The initial function of the Supervision Team is orientation. The Team provides, in a half day initial session with student teachers, information specific to the school and to the beginning of their experience. This orientation continues through weekly seminars throughout the student teaching experience. Perhaps the great amount of information covered is more than can be initially absorbed, but the purpose is to make the situation known and to put the student teachers at ease. Orientation covers such topics as school facilities, school mechanics from piddling supply routes to disciplinary channels, school philosophy by bringing in the school's administrators, the nature of the student population the school serves, and an explanation of the Team's role. Additionally, the Team introduces the student teachers to their cooperating teachers. Thereafter, the means of continuing orientation is through the seminars.

Planning and implementation of these seminars is a second integral function of the School-Based Team. Although the exact description, timing and number of sessions may vary, the structure is based on utilization of Team members as facilitators. Optimum planning is detailed but flexible, striving for intragroup dynamics, active participation by student teachers and most of all, responsiveness to group and individual needs. Seminar topics tend to deal more with practical information than with theoretical matters. In soliciting student teachers' concerns, the Team has found that the topics identified as most pertinent inevitably reflected a leaning toward the concrete -- such as classroom management, audio visual materials and machinery, and techniques for dealing with wide ranges of ability levels.

A third function of the Team is that of making student teachers aware of the school as an entity and themselves as individual teachers within this structure, both philosophically and practically. Through coordination of the student teachers' experiences, the Team arranges for some time to be spent by student teachers working with students in resource and alternative programs and helps student teachers set up peer observations and give each other feedback. Through these means, both in seminars and by observations, the student teachers can teach each other. Another aspect of this coordinating role is matching student teachers with cooperating teachers, based on mutual needs, and often either broadening the scope of student teachers' experiences or adjusting schedules as needs arise. In these areas, a school-based Team has the advantage of being available to arrange for the involvement of two or more cooperating teachers or to adjust student teacher's pace and load on individual bases.

The facet that ties the Team most closely to the university is the role of direct supervision. Formally, each Team member supervises two student teachers and seeks to preconference, observe, and postconference at least four times. However, through informal "supervision" the Team's greatest strength can be found; namely, there are four members of a Team, each with a different personality, from whom a student teacher can seek help. Secondly, there is what might be termed proximity service; that is, the Team members see the student teachers through the day -- at lunch, across the hall as classes pass, in the faculty lounge, in other places. With this informal contact through the day, a team member can show continued interest to many student teachers, not merely those under that member's direct supervision. Additionally, this continuing contact allows the Team to sense crises as they develop. The Team is simply readily accessible.

A final function of the Team is that of evaluation. There are two very different yet significant aspects to evaluation. The first is the responsibility of Team members, based on observations and pre and postconferencing, to complete final evaluation forms. The other aspect is the ongoing evaluation of the model through formal and informal means.

Overall, the Team's functions can be viewed from the perspectives of the four external groups whom it serves, bridges, and supports. To the university supervisors who would ordinarily perform this task, the Team is College supervision extended to the school setting. The Team's supervision does not preclude separate observations by university supervisors and/or their aid.

To its professional peers, specifically other cooperating teachers, the Team is a group of cooperating teachers who are not to be seen as anything but equals with a difference in task. In addition to the role of cooperating teacher is that of supervisor, similar but with a notable distinction. The supervisory emphasis is on general classroom techniques, not "intruding" on content expertise.

To the student teachers, the Team is a cooperative unit acting as "the university supervisor" with knowledge of that school's specific situation. The Team evaluates student teaching performance and holds seminars as an extension of the university conveniently in the location of the student teaching experience. The Team thereby becomes a more personal extension of the university through the closer ties that develop as a result of such frequent communication among student teachers and Team members.

To the school's students, the Team members are teachers of another kind of student - the student teacher. The Team members are interested in what

is going on in the department areas of those whom a team member supervises. The students view this interest as unifying the school. This role delineation must be communicated clearly, completely, and often if it is to remain viable and nonthreatening.

Inservice Connection

A primary remuneration for teachers acting as members of the Supervision Team is the opportunity to take three hours of field-based graduate level work in the area of supervision, with the University of Maryland granting tuition credit for each semester's participation. This course work is not just traditional formal instruction, but also involves independent projects that team members can relate to their particular situation. Team members, through meetings with the college representative, not only obtain the basic skills for the observation and evaluation of student teachers, but engage in the dialogue necessary to develop Team building and problem solving skills applicable to the experience in which they are involved.

The professional growth that takes place within this format goes far beyond the skills and knowledge usually obtained in formal classroom instruction on campus. Team members, individually or as a group, satisfy academic requirements through relevant written projects, but the true professional growth in the area of preservice supervision comes through the actual experience of working with their fellow professionals and College of Education undergraduates within the setting of the contemporary secondary school. The transferability of these Team building, communications and problem solving skills is a major element of meaningful professional growth. Simultaneously, the inservice connection forges greater links between theory and practice, and between the campus and the field, so that a genuinely comprehensive perspective develops for all concerned.

Process Evolution/Problem Solving

The primary responsibility of preservice supervisory personnel is to coordinate the expectations of a college of education and the demands at the cooperating site to best maximize the learning experience for student teachers. The Team, as a supervision agent, must decide how best to achieve this end and plan accordingly. Decisions regarding seminar scheduling and topics, observations and evaluation criteria, along with more specific problems that may occur during the student teaching experience, must be dealt with. It should be noted that although the Team has a great deal of autonomy with its decision making process, the Team is often too close to a problem to accurately identify and take steps to solve it. The conferences held between the Team and the College representative have proven immensely helpful, as problems can be thoroughly aired and an objective point of view presented. The forum of discussion and the non-involved perspective of the college representative has generated at least as much professional growth on the part of team members as has any formal research. The evolution of the problem solving process is illustrated below.

One of the student teachers assigned to the site was assigned to two cooperating teachers of varying styles in hopes that she could synthesize the best of both styles into her pre-service experience. As it turned out, however, several factors worked against this previously successful strategy. The cooperating teachers shared neither a personal nor professional rapport and communications between the two were totally lacking. The dichotomy of teaching styles was apparently too sharp for the student teacher, and frustration on the part of all constituents soon developed. The Team member directly supervising

the student teacher was told by all parties that everything was going fine, but another Team member that had more incidental contact soon discovered the existence of problems.

Attempts by the Supervision Team member to reconcile difficulties were proving inadequate, and conferences with other team members did not develop a workable plan of action. At a Team meeting with the College representative, the problem was discussed and options aired. Appropriate contact personnel at the University were identified and their possible intervention planned for. A strategy was formulated and implemented that involved placing the student teacher with only one of the cooperating teachers. Other Team members were asked to monitor the situation since direct communication between student teacher and her specific team supervisor appeared to be lacking.

An observation after a week of the new arrangement disclosed that the recommended plan was inappropriate. As the student teacher was becoming frustrated to the point of giving up, the student's advisors at the University were called in for support, and the team member charged with direct supervision was finally able to establish a definitive course of action that reversed the original plan. The remaining pre-service experience of the student teacher was carefully observed for future difficulties by all team members, and the student teacher eventually demonstrated much personal and professional growth over the remainder of her experience.

Although a written narrative of the above example perhaps fails to demonstrate the extent of team building and problem solving that developed, an important principle became apparent to Team members. In many cases the individual supervisor may not be cognizant of difficulties that occur between student teachers and cooperating teachers that other Team members, for various reasons, may be more aware of.

Nor is it always possible for problems to be solved by one individual without the input of other Team members and/or the college representative because of being too close to a situation. This certainly is not true in every case, but the input and support of the Team definitely enabled this one problem to be solved. This dynamic is believed to be a major strength of the team concept.

Evaluations

Evaluation of this pilot effort, as stated previously, was limited to data collection on participant satisfaction and response. Questionnaires were devised by the Team and were administered to student teachers as well as non-Team cooperating teachers. Administrators and Team members were interviewed. Questionnaire responses were anonymous and included a range of "forced choice" and open-ended "essay" questions. Interviews were relatively informal and were directed to the solicitation of reactions to the pilot program. In the case of student teachers a three-level reaction was sought: 1) reaction to the student teaching experience and to the school as a student teaching site; 2) reaction to the cooperating teacher as advisor, facilitator, evaluator; 3) reaction to the Team as advisor, facilitator, evaluator, and seminar director. In the case of cooperating teachers and building administrators, reaction was generally sought regarding assessment of the Team supervision concept in practice, its effect and degree of success, and its implications for the school.

Responses to the questionnaire were generally very positive and reinforced the idea that the Team supervision approach could work as an alternative to other models of college-oriented supervision. Student teachers, on the whole, reported that the school situation provided a valuable student teaching experience, that they had learned a great deal from it, and that the atmosphere of the school was perceived as warm and open to student teachers. Relationships

with cooperating teachers were reported to be positive, feedback was viewed as sufficient in quantity and quality, and mutual openness was generally reported as present throughout. The Team was viewed positively, both as a source of help and fair evaluation as well as a source of caring and personal advisement. Student teachers generally rejected the notion that a traditional university supervisor would have been more helpful than the Team, and they expressed a sense of appreciation for the value of this kind of on-site resource. Seminars were viewed as worthwhile and productive; however, the before-school hour was seen as a definite problem. Other problems cited indicated other competing time demands and needs, one unfavorable response to the practice of cross-discipline supervision, and some desire for more visible participation by University people.

Overall, cooperating teachers approved of the concept and reacted positively to the role their colleagues were playing. There was some concern about the amount of time Team members were allowing for their supervisor role, but sentiment was generally supportive. Administrators, too were quite supportive and saw two elements of the program as key: 1) A team of teachers could handle this job and provide excellent resources to "resident" student teachers; 2) The addition of the student teachers to the building was a positive infusion that should be maintained. A concern was expressed regarding the demands of the role and the time commitment involved. However, on balance, the professional growth for Team members and others, and the addition of a preservice program to the school environment seemed to outweigh the potential difficulties. Finally, the Team members' own perceptions also reinforced confidence in the viability of this alternative. Problems seen included severe time demands, combined work load, and occasional stress from problem solving situations.

However, they strongly valued the experience, their own professional growth, the concept of the Team and the contribution they perceived they had made. Endorsement of the approach was made tangible by the fact that each member expressed desire to continue in this role and to devote themselves to furtherance of the concept. The Team concluded, then, that reactions to the pilot effort were positive and represented general support from each of the directly participating constituencies. University personnel, interviewed by the college representative, expressed similar support and openness to continuation.

Importance of Team member selection

Evaluation and reflection, which showed positive perceptions, also led to the conscious recognition that selection of Team members was an element of singular importance. After all, the heart of any educational endeavor is in the people who design and implement it. This matter was no exception. Qualities of individuals might vary significantly, but certain qualities seem essential to an effective team:

1. A strong interest in supervision and preservice education, with experience preferable
2. Representation of diverse teaching fields, backgrounds, styles, and philosophies
3. An ability to work well with others in a team relationship
4. A good rapport with peers
5. Willingness to take time to fulfill the role demands
6. Respect and appreciation for others' points of view and values.

If these qualities were not present, then success would probably be less than assured. For once the team is operating, as previously stated, it is

fairly autonomous. The planning, sensitivity to problems, solving of problems, and scheduling of observations, conferences, contact with University liaisons, and other aspects of operation are all self-directed. If the Team is not initially comprised of people who can do these things well, then the concept is severely damaged.

Traditional Objectives

Reflective evaluation includes consideration of the objectives of supervision and the supervisory role in general. A question is raised as to whether this alternative approach meets traditional objectives for college-oriented supervision along with new objectives generated by the Team concept.

It seems that the major traditional objectives were met:

- 1) Orientations were arranged and carried out thoroughly; i.e., the school was prepared for the student teachers and the student teachers were prepared for the school.
- 2) Seminars were provided and dealt with the two areas of usual concern: problems with the student teacher role and problems with instruction and management in the classroom.
- 3) Supervision was provided on a one to one basis, concentrating on general teaching skills and effectiveness from a different perspective than that of the cooperating teacher. Supervision by Team members was periodic and normally incorporated pre- and post-observation conferences, often including the cooperating teacher in a three-way communication.

Thus, the Team approach met traditional objectives of college-oriented supervision in the basic role definition. Not only were responsibilities of traditional campus-based supervisors covered, but also those of an on-site

generalist pre-service coordinator. What was missing, of course, was the regular presence of university supervisors in the school. However, contact was maintained with these persons by the Team and visits were facilitated. If difficulties arose, involvement of the university liaison person in a particular discipline did not prove to be a problem.

Unforeseen Strengths

The nature of the student teaching experience is such that a great deal of anxiety is often present on the part of student teachers. The undergraduates are very aware of the importance of the evaluation of their performance. The setting for student teaching can be far removed from the college classroom and the personnel at the cooperating schools represent an unknown quantity. Without the presence of an effective mediating force, student teachers can experience exaggerated difficulties. The Team has proven to be just such a force because it is not only a link with the University, but is an integral part of the student teaching site.

The lack of communication between staff members is detrimental to the process of education in any school. The site for the model is probably above average in the quality of staff to staff communication, but not without its problems. Much communication did take place among Supervision Team members and other staff members particularly cooperating teachers, that may not have occurred had the student teacher's supervisor been an "outsider". This proved to be an advantage for all involved.

Another benefit of the model that was not foreseen was the opportunity for the Team members to get a feel for what goes on within a secondary public school classroom other than their own. All team members felt that they profited from having the opportunity to observe the teaching process in other

content areas, a role that is not often available in the segmented, discipline-oriented, secondary school. Continued cross-discipline supervision, it would seem, can help improve communications and empathy between staff members at a site for student teaching.

In almost any other model of pre-service education, the supervision of student teachers is done by an individual that represents a college of education. No matter how supportive of university policy a cooperating teacher may be, a common perception is that the methods instructor is a representative of the "theoretical world". Often this dichotomy of perspectives on the art of teaching is detrimental to the development of teachers who should see the university as a community and academic support site. What is often forgotten by public school teachers is that often they did incorporate knowledge and skills gained in undergraduate preparation in their classrooms when they started teaching. It is also forgotten that this is often the only background that student teachers bring with them to the cooperating site. No matter how effective the journeyman teacher becomes with experience, professional growth should be perceived by that teacher as a real opportunity through continued association with a college.

The Team concept provides for such an association. The placing of student teachers under the supervision of successful teachers who both recognize the stresses and strains of practical teaching and at the same time reinforce the perspective of the university would appear to accomplish two things: 1) It provides a credible multiple resource from which student teachers can learn and on whom they can depend, and 2) it goes a long way towards solving the "us-them" perception that so often separates the public school and the university.

The concept of a team of public school teachers, aware of the trials and tribulations of daily teaching, working in support of the university's goals cannot help but develop an awareness of the marriage between the two institutions for the participating student teachers. An on-site Supervision Team has the opportunity to represent both the "real" and "theoretical" worlds. For example, frustration often occurs when a concept encouraged from the research base of the university, such as implementing individualized instruction, is attempted by the inexperienced student teacher in the setting of the public school classroom. Supervision Team members can not only verbally support the attempt to put theory into practice, but in their own day to day classroom performance can show student teachers that these "theories" do work. In summary, the School-Based Supervision Team offers a unique opportunity to close the gap between the university and the public school.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Experiences with adaptation and implementation of any model, including this one, will vary from instance to instance. There are unique factors inherent in each situation. The pilot experience, in which this model was first tested, was a notable success. Participants perceived that a number of advantages clearly emerged as events unfolded and enlightened the concepts which had previously been abstract projections. Yet, satisfaction with this positive experience did not preclude the recognition of possible pitfalls or the need to hypothesize potential advantage-disadvantage considerations.

Potential Advantages

The Team is "on-site" and close to reality of the teaching situation and its demands. Student teachers' ability to adjust to the school setting and to cope with problems is thus enhanced by ready access to the first-hand understanding and experience of the team.

The School-Based Supervision Team concept offers a unique vehicle for closing the gap between universities and public schools in the area of pre-service education.

The interdisciplinary approach to supervision promotes useful focusing on general teaching skills and competencies while avoiding subject matter based "hang-ups" and conflicts.

The interdisciplinary approach to supervision promotes genuine communication and enhances insights across school departments and teaching areas.

The Team is strengthened by inclusion of professionals with diverse philosophies, styles, and backgrounds. Mutual respect and communication help weld the differences into a unified team whose nature provides a richness unavailable from a single source.

Potential Disadvantages

The Team is removed from the university environment and its perspectives. Thus it may lack the objectivity inherent in university personnel's distance from school conditions and advice to student teachers may be too subjective and parochial.

This mixing of traditional institutional roles may affect a healthy balance of theory and practice and reduce the impact of fresh ideas (brought by student teachers) in favor of quicker socialization to the "system".

Leaving subject matter based feedback to the province of the cooperating teacher may limit a significant supervisory contribution in this realm.

Some cooperating teachers and/or other school personnel may resent "intrusion" by peers from other areas and may denigrate the validity of team members' perceptions.

Disparate philosophies, styles, and backgrounds may prevent formation of a cohesive team unit and student teachers may suffer from having to deal with conflicting expectations and approaches.

The school administration lends added support to the program because it is integrated with the school staff and involves a significant professional contribution by and to the school.

Team members grow personally and professionally by their involvement in the planning and execution of the program and by their enhanced professional role.

The university values the involvement and contributions of school-based teams and encourages their work through collaboration and suggestions.

The School-Based Supervision Team concept offers the field of teacher education a tangible vehicle for integrating a great deal of fresh input from talented practicing teachers. It provides addition of significant human resources at a small cost.

The school administration may view the program as a conflict of interests and a diversion from the primary role and responsibilities of the school and its staff.

Team members may be spread "too thin" as a result of the time and responsibility demands inherent in the coordination and supervision role.

University professors may resent team members, who are not part of "the department", taking up supervisory responsibilities and may not believe that teams have the background or ability to function at this level.

If the process which recruits teachers for team participation is not handled with care, the resultant input may be shallow or unimaginative and may not contribute a rich increment to the program.

The ledger, above, is presented as an aid to objective examination of factors which might have local significance in other settings. In practice, participants in the pilot experience found that the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. The likelihood of that positive outcome being replicated, and of advantages overshadowing any disadvantages, depends on the care, the people, and the communication involved in the establishment of other versions of this program.

The School-Based Supervision Team Model is offered as a viable alternative to collaboration in teacher education with positive contributions from university and school perspectives. The program is not viewed as the way, or necessarily the better way, but one which has promise if the right conditions are met.